

GENERAL NOTES

Colorado nesting records of Starlings.—Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) are now firmly established in Colorado, although they are not observed commonly. The first were taken in this state December 17, 1938 (R. B. Rockwell, *Wils.Bull.*, 51, 1939:46), and they have been recorded many times since, being quite numerous in the winter.

George Breiding (*Wils. Bull.*, 55, 1943:247) reported that an adult Starling was carrying food into a cracked tile of a silo near Lowry Field, Denver, Colorado, on May 16, 1943. He could not see the young, but heard them calling, and a week later he saw two young Starlings in a willow near by.

On May 25, 1945, I collected a set of five eggs, the first of this species to be secured in the state, from near Barr, Colorado. The nest was a bulky construction of grass in a hole in a box elder, about seven feet from the ground. I observed another nest, with large young, in this same general location on June 15, 1945.—ROBERT J. NIEDRACH, *The Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado.*

Robin using abandoned Cardinal nest.—In Hillsdale Park, Baltimore, in 1945, the nest of a Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) that had stood abandoned and empty for more than two weeks was taken over by Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) and used well into the period of incubation, at which time it was destroyed by human interference. The nest was in a position that Robins themselves might have chosen: in a tangle of honeysuckle about six feet up in an 8-foot redbud tree. It was constructed chiefly of honeysuckle vine, with a foundation of dead leaves and a lining of grass; it was fresh and clean, and the Robin made no noticeable alteration. Measured after some days' use by the Robin, it was 3 inches high by 5½ inches wide outside; the interior was oval in shape, 3½ inches long by 2½ wide, and 2½ deep. These figures differed hardly at all from the measurements of a newly made Cardinal's nest close by.

I inspected the nest daily between April 15 (when I first found it) and April 26, and irregularly between April 26 and May 1, always finding it empty. On the evening of May 5, however, it held a Robin's egg, which I marked. At 10:22 A.M. and 1:48 P.M. on May 6 there was still only that one egg, but between 9:54 and 11:35 A.M. (E.S.T.) on May 7, a second egg was laid; on May 8, a third; on May 9, a fourth. The eggs measured (in the order laid): 27.5 x 20.0 mm.; 28.0 x 20.0 mm.; 27.5 x 20.0 mm.; 27.0 x 19.5 mm.

There are few published instances of Robins using strange nests; Howell (*Amer. Midl. Nat.*, 28, 1942:529-603) describes their use of a Blue Jay nest and cites five instances from the literature of casual laying by Robins in other birds' nests.—HERVEY BRACKBELL, 4608 Springdale Avenue, Baltimore 7, Maryland.

Absorbent for use in the preparation of scientific skins.—For several years I have used in the preparation of bird skins a finely ground cellulose (through a 150-mesh screen). I have found this "flock" much more effective than other absorbents. By alternate application of water and cellulose powder and removal of the powder with a soft brush, every trace of blood can be removed from the feathers, which are left in a fluffy, natural condition. The powder, particularly when moistened with a solvent for fats, is also very serviceable in removing grease from feathers. Its use during skinning to absorb blood and other liquids is obvious.

"Cotton flock" is made from cotton, "alpha flock" from wood pulp produced by a chemical process that renders it especially absorbent. The flocks, used largely in the production of molding compounds from synthetic resins, are commercially available, selling at about 10 cents a pound when bought in quantity.—A. W. SCHORGER, 168 N. Prospect Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin.